

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This response is being filed within the statutory period for response, which is due to expire on November 12, 2006.

The present paper is being filed in response to the Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment dated October 12, 2006. In that Notice, the previous amendment dated October 2, 2006 was deemed non-compliant because the signature is missing. Applicants hereby resubmit said amendment which is signed using the /s/ signature.

Claims 1 and 3-21 are pending in the application. Applicants have amend claims 1 and 21 to clarify that the tissue approximation device of the present invention has adhesive pads that are spaced apart from the attachment means in the direction of the elongate arms, and that the tissue approximation device has an open and a closed position, and when in the closed position, the adhesive pads are parallel and non-contiguous to each other. Support for this amendment can be found in the originally filed drawings 1-2, 6, 9 and 11. No new matter has been incorporated into the application as a result of the amendments made herein.

Election of Species

The Examiner has required Applicant to elect a single disclosed species for prosecution of the merits to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable. Specifically, an election of one of the following species has been required:

Species 1 – Figure 2, relating to a pair of slidable bosses attachment means; or

Species 2 – Figure 6, relating to a yoke attachment means.

In a telephone conversation with the Examiner on 16 May 2006, Applicant provisionally elected Species 2, to which the claims will be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable. Applicants hereby confirm the election of Species 2. Claims 1, 5-6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18-21 read on the elected species and claims 1 and 19-21 are generic.

Rejection Under 35 USC 102(b) Based on Hasson

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1, 2 and 19-21 as being anticipated by Hasson.

Applicants have amend claim 1 and 21 to clarify that the tissue approximation device of the present invention has adhesive pads that are spaced apart from the attachment means in the direction of the elongate arms, and that the tissue approximation device has an open and a closed position, and when in the closed position, the adhesive pads are parallel and non-contiguous to each other. The arrangement of the adhesive pads and the attachment means in the present invention allows the device to be used during application and curing of a topical skin closure adhesive on the wound, as described in lines 1-5 on page 2 of the instant specification. More specifically, as shown in Figure 11, the attachment means does not traverse the wound, leaving the wound accessible for closure using a topical skin closure adhesive.

By contrast, Hasson discloses a device where the adhesive pads are collinear with the attachment means for the full length of the elongate arms, thereby preventing its device from being used during application and curing of a topical skin closure adhesive on the wound. More particularly, the attachment means of Hasson (tie member 22) traverse the wound, making the wound inaccessible for closure using a topical skin closure adhesive. It is clear that the device described by Hasson is not intended to be used during application and curing of a topical skin closure adhesive. In summary, Hasson fails to disclose a

device where the adhesive pads are spaced apart from the attachment means in the direction of the elongate arms, thereby leaving the wound accessible for wound closure using a topical skin closure adhesive.

In view of the foregoing remarks, it is clear that the present invention is not anticipated by Hasson. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are appropriate.

Rejection Under 35 USC 102(b) Based on Fogarty

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1, 5-6, 12, 14, 16, and 18 being anticipated by Fogarty.

As discussed above, Applicants have amend claim 1 to clarify that the tissue approximation device of the present invention has adhesive pads that are spaced apart from the attachment means in the direction of the elongate arms, and that the tissue approximation device has an open and a closed position, and when in the closed position, the adhesive pads are parallel and non-contiguous to each other. The arrangement of the adhesive pads in the present invention allows the device to be used to maintain approximation of a wound without substantial eversion of the edge surfaces off the wound during application and curing of a topical skin closure adhesive on the wound, as described in lines 1-5 on page 2 of the instant specification. More specifically, as shown in Figure 11, the adhesive pads remain parallel in the same plane and are non-contiguous to each other.

By contrast, Fogarty discloses a clamp device where the cohesive-adhesive pads are parallel in different planes and contiguous when the device is in the closed position. It is clear that the clamp device of Fogarty is intended for use in vessel occlusion, not to approximate a wound. In summary, Fogarty fails to disclose the tissue approximation device of the present invention that has an

open and a closed position, and when in the closed position, the adhesive pads are parallel and non-contiguous to each other.

In view of the foregoing remarks, it is clear that the present invention is not anticipated by Fogarty. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are appropriate.

Rejection Under 35 USC 103(a) Based on Fogarty in view of Agnone

The Examiner has rejected Claims 8 and 10 as being unpatentable over Fogarty in view of Agnone. Specifically, the Examiner has relied upon Agnone for its teaching of a ball and socket joint.

Applicants repeat their remarks with respect to Fogarty herein.

Like Fogarty, Agnone fails to disclose the tissue approximation device of the present invention that has an open and a closed position, and when in the closed position, the adhesive pads are parallel and non-contiguous to each other. Therefore, Agnone fails to cure the deficiency of Fogarty, and as such, the combination of these two references fails to render the present invention obvious. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

/Blossom E. Loo/

By: _____
Blossom E. Loo
Reg. No. 36,858

Johnson & Johnson
One Johnson & Johnson Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08933-7003
(732) 524-1596
Dated: October 18, 2006